

MORNING 28, 105
 SUNDAY 37, 008
 APR 15 1962

Approved For Release 2004/01/16 : CIA-RDP75-00149R000500440026-4

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Nixon's Critics Never Stop Trying

Old enemies never die. They merely refurbish their rusty weapons. And since Richard Nixon has been so well endowed with implacable critics, his new book, "Six Crises," has been combed for errors. One of these critics is apparently in the White House, for there was issued from that source a denial that when Candidate Kennedy stated in the 1960 campaign that action should be taken to overthrow Castro, he knew that preparations for such a revolt were already under way under the direction of the U. S. Central Intelligence Agency.

The issue raised here between Messrs. Nixon and Kennedy involves not only a grave matter of national policy but of fairness and responsibility in campaigning for the Presidency. This matter also had a very significant bearing on the outcome of the campaign.

On September 23, 1960 Mr. Kennedy gave an exclusive statement to the Scripps - Howard newspapers saying, "The forces fighting for freedom in exile and in the mountains of Cuba should be sustained and assisted." Then, on October 20th of the same year, he said, "We must attempt to strengthen the non-Batista democratic anti-Castro forces in exile, and in Cuba itself, who offer eventual hope of overthrowing Castro."

Mr. Nixon knew that such preparations for a revolution in Cuba were already secretly under way,

and he also knew that his opponent had been briefed on all phases of foreign policy by Allen Dulles, chief of the CIA. He therefore had no option but to believe that Mr. Kennedy was recklessly using that information to propose something which the Eisenhower Administration was preparing.

But before replying to the Kennedy statement, Mr. Nixon asked Interior Secretary Fred Seaton to go to the White House and find out if Mr. Kennedy had been informed of the secret operations. Seaton reported that the candidate had been so informed.

This put Mr. Nixon in a critical dilemma. If he joined in the Kennedy advocacy of intervention, which would have been very popular with the country, he would be implying that such preparations were under way, because he was known to have been a factor in making Administration policy with regard to Cuba. Nor could he accuse his opponent of making public what had been communicated confidentially to him in the briefing. For that, too, would uncover the secret operation.

All he could do was to charge Mr. Kennedy with recklessness. Thus he was at a great disadvantage, since it made him seem to be "softer" on Castro than his opponent.

All this he revealed in his book. Then the White House on March 20, 1962 issued a statement that

Mr. Kennedy did not know about the Cuban preparations when he made his statements in 1960. And Allen Dulles chimed in with a statement that there had been a "misunderstanding."

Mr. Nixon then issued a statement standing by his statement in the book and adding, "President Eisenhower has authorized me to state that, following the practice he had established in 1956, he had given instructions that in regard to U. S. intelligence operations abroad, Senator Kennedy was to be as fully briefed on our foreign problems as I was."

If the critics of Mr. Nixon wish to be fair, which I doubt, they would turn this question back to Messrs. Kennedy and Dulles.

Did or did not Allen Dulles obey the orders of President Eisenhower and tell Mr. Kennedy about the most important Cuban preparations? If so, why does Mr. Kennedy now deny that he knew what he was supposed to know? A matter of veracity is involved here, or at least a matter for clarification.